DESIGN QUARTERLY



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KAY BOJESEN

Kay Bojesen was born in Copenhagen in 1886, went into business in 1906 and became a silversmith in 1910. He joined Georg Jensen in 1907, and later went to Germany and France. Returning to Denmark in 1913, he set up as a silversmith in Copenhagen. His biographes, Pierre Lubecker, says of him—

He himself for owed the old and tried path to the silversmith's art by learning the trade, and his pieces pear the stamp of the trained craftsman. He has become so much at one with his material that he instinctively acts as it demands and respects its long established traditions. But what he learned in the workshop has never restrained him: he has only made use of it in so far as it could benefit his purpose, and has had no scruples about rejecting traditional points of view of which he could not approve. These have not been few in the course of the years.

Notwithstanding, he always emphasizes the value of a thorough training in the craft. "It seems obvious to me," he says, "that anyone who has personally experienced, as a designer, what it is to identify himself with the properties and possibilities of his material must quite instinctively avoid the worst technical errors."

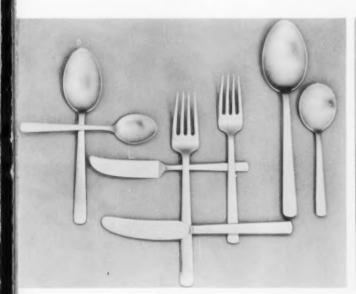
Kay Bojesen is one of the few Danish industrial artists whose clarification of design at once aimed at cultivating pure types—investigating the interaction between technique and form, and between form and application. As far as he is concerned, creating beautiful things is not a matter of taste or feeling but pre-eminently a question of common sense.

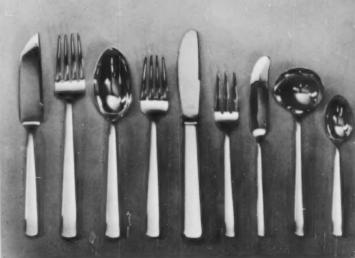
The calculated and the sophisticated arouse his inveterate mistrust, and he has never really had much faith in the cachet of a personality which must be pushed. For his own originality springs from imagination and experience.

He has, however, often sought inspiration in the pieces made by the old craftsmen, and by going direct to the sources has not only succeeded in renewing himself and setting his personality free, but, in the best sense of the word, reviving an appreciation of traditions without being daunted by them.*



Stainless steel place setting Silver place setting







Teakwood chimpanzees

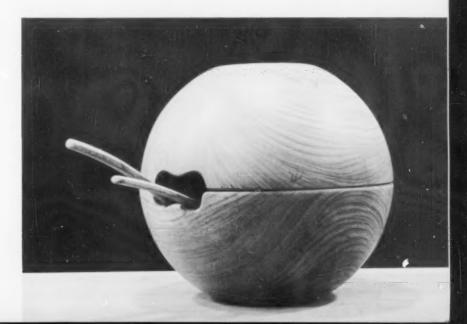
Silver casseroles with ebony handles





Cream spoon Paper knife and envelope opener Lobster fork Whisky whip Neptune fork Fork Mocca spoon Butter knife

Teakwood salad bowl



HANS J. CHRISTENSEN



In designing silver objects I place a great deal of importance on the play of light and shadow, balance for the eye as well as for the hand, remembering function which is so often forgottan. I feel that students, particularly in this country, are putting too much emphasis on becoming artists rather than on learning first to be good craftsmen.

Silver is more to me than mere decoration. It is a wonderful metal capable of being made into any number of forms. I use sterling because of its rich working possibilities and its permanence. I prefer a satin finish, avoiding high, shiny polishes which give a hard machine look, just as I like the warm, gratifying complement of rosewood and silver. Because it is a precious metal it should be treated as such and not be used with synthetic products. A precisely worked piece of silver is more than just an ephemera, and if properly cared for should grow more beautiful with the years, acquiring personality with use.

Hans J. Christensen



Hans J. Christensen was born in Copenhagen and began his chosen career as an apprentice to Georg Jensen. He spent nearly five years as an apprentice during which time he attended the School for Danish Craftsmen. He remained with Georg Jensen until 1952 when he entered the Art Academy of Goldsmiths in Copenhagen. The following season he exhibited his work and received an award from the Association of Danish Silversmiths. In 1954 he came to the United States, and he is now on the teaching staff of the Rochester Institute of Technology.





Silver pitcher Silver creamer and sugar bowl Silver tea pot



DAVID HATCH







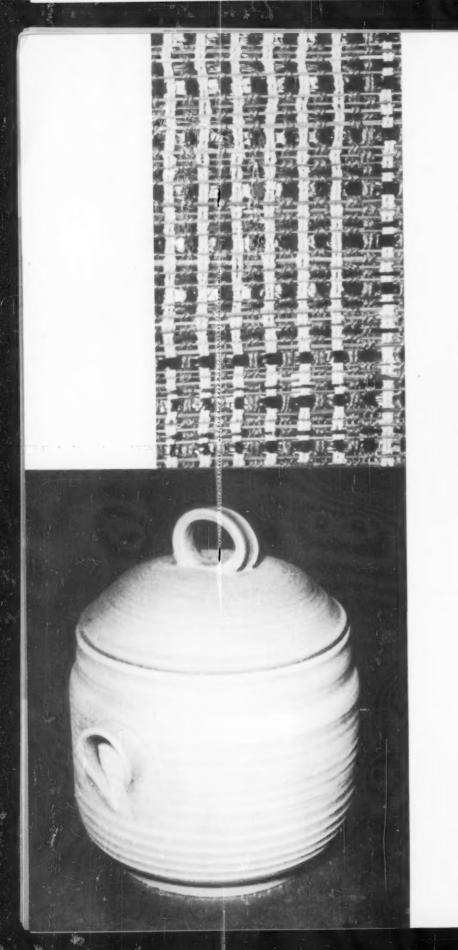


David Hatch, assistant professor at the University of Oregon, is currently teaching crafts in Burma, having received a Fulbright Award to Southeast Asia for the year 1956-57. In 1950 he spent the summer duplicating gravity casting techniques and other metal-working methods used by the Indians of the Southwest. Most recently he has recapitulated the granular gold decorative techniques of the middle ages. He has done museum work in jewelry restoration and has completed an exhaustive study of the materials and methods of ancient Asian metal workers for the Anthropology Department at the University of Oregon. He is skilled in several crafts but prefers to be regarded as a potter.

In response to a request for a statement of his personal philosophical viewpoint, Mr. Hatch offered comments which we found both interesting and direct. We are, therefore, publishing part of his letter, written just before he left for Burma.

In talking with recent graduates I find myself embarrassed when the same kind of opinionation to which I was addicted as a student manifests itself. Consequently, though I continue to believe in the importance of certain qualities (honesty and forthrightness of statement, or expressed qualities, physical utility, originality of contribution, etcetera), I have little interest or faith in the minutiae of discriminations within the realm of esthetic speculation. Beyond a few none too personally held generalizations on the nature of art (which would largely fail to satisfy the partisan enthusiasts of esthetic conjecture), I have little or nothing I would want to verbalize. I have a strong feeling, also not original, that what I materially create can and does stand without verbal support. In other words, taking art as a whole, I would be vastly more concerned with the content or expressed character of a work than with its form.

There are ethical considerations or moral judgments that I am more favorably disposed to continue to make, and fortunately or unfortunately I still am not immune to strong convictions. I am firmly convinced that it is dishonoring potting to make a useless pot. There are pots which deny their proclaimed usage because of their toxic glazes, heavily crazed glazes, ruptured volcanic surfaces, excessively low-fired non-vitreous bodies, exceptionally elongated necks, narrow mouths, tiny feet, or other malformations. When a



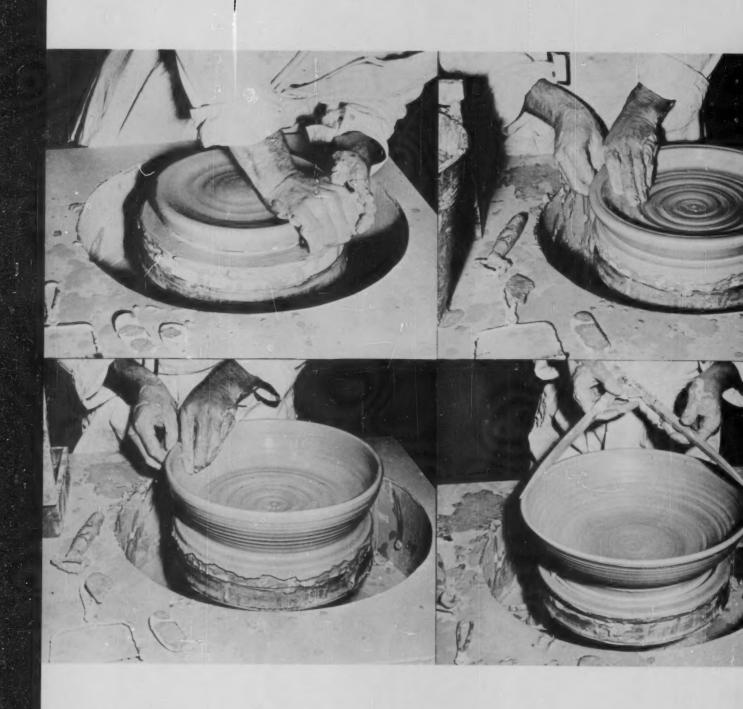


Fabric—"Mexico" Stoneware pitcher Stoneware bowl



soup bowl poisons its contents, a fruit bowl shatters when handled, a glaze retains food particles to putrefy, a bottle splatters and drips when its contents are dispensed for use, or when a handle is placed so that it becomes a strenuous and silly ordeal to use it, or a foot is so small that the pot easily upsets, then the pot is a bad one whether or not it is visually satisfying.

A second major and partly ethical consideration for me has to do with pots which seem to be striated boulders—or anything other than what they are. I dislike disguises in all the crafts, both in hand and machine products. For this reason, simulated wood graining on the all-steel bodies of station wagons, simulated ball peening on punch and die single-stamped aluminum trays, roller-dyed simulated woven plaid on plastic sheeting and picnic baskets, Tobias mugs, etcetera, etcetera, impress me as a fundamental kind of dishonesty. Excepted, because of special highly religious symbology, are those products of primitive man which would not be properly classed with those of our culture. Actually, it is easier to see the relationship between a corpse and a funerary vessel carved to





represent the deceased than it is to see the relationship of a simulated granite boulder of clay serving as a decanter and its contents.

I am well aware that there can be no hard and fast rules within the area of ethical discriminations any more than within the esthetic, and it would not be difficult for me to be philosophically cornered by an alert intellect. It is clear, however, that in my examples I am manifesting a rejection of fakery and enjoining craftsmen to examine their work for honesty and directness.

As far as methodology is concerned, I am personally dedicated to whatever level of technical perfection I myself can attain; this applies to all aspects of the crafts in which I engage, some of which may never be apparent to the consumer. A good example is in the finished regular treatment of selvage edges that will be chewed into by the dressmaker. It is simply a personal satisfaction to treat the whole product with equal care. For this reason even wholly concealed solder joints in hollow ware need to be even and free from blemish in my estimation. In other words, I relate the technical considerations to the esthetic in analyzing how I feel about handcrafts, believing that there is a moral requirement underlying many aspects of a craft.

I do not intend to negate the importance of original contributions designwise in crafts. It is as important in this framework as in life generally that a person pull his own weight and not live parasitically (eclectically), contributing nothing to the world which nurtures him. My personal feeling is that there are visible at this time the broad outlines of a "cult of contemporaneity" within which the preponderance of representatives are, whether consciously or not, copying each other rather than objectifying truly internalized concepts.

An invaluable opportunity which has been open to me is having access to pieces of great age, representing many cultures, for study in our local museums. I have had a chance to do restoration work, as well as spectographic, microscopic, and other analyses, the nature of which has opened up horizons not likely to present themselves otherwise. Antiquities reparation gives one an appreciation for his brother craftsmen through the ages which adds a great deal of depth to the philosophic base from which one creates. I have, moreover, continued my anthropological studies (within the confines of material culture) as well as attempted to read any and all available monographs on craft technologies around the world. I feel that my own work, as well as my understanding, is likely to be richer because of acquaintance with the processes and motivations of craftsmen of all times. Therefore, I am as happy studying ancient Peruvian gauze weaves, metalsmithing in the Bronze age, or Rhages pottery, as I am knowing about current practices.

David Hatch

LUKE AND ROLLAND LIETZKE

Luke and Rolland Lietzke maintain their shop near their home on twelve acres of hill and valley or arlooking the Mogadore Reservoir, about twelve miles east of Akron, Ohio. Both were art majors at Michigan State College where they met. Rolland's early design years were spent in the fabric field. Luke went into fashion reporting, advertising and display. Rolland's major work has been in machine and equipment design at Firestone Tire & Rubber, and Goodyear Tire and Rubber, in Akron. Since 1946 Luke has been associated with the Akron Art Institute where she developed their Art In Use department and is Curator of Industrial Design.

Neither had any formal education in ceramics. They are designers, and clay was just another medium they wanted to try. They fired their kiln for the first time in December 1948, and delivered their first ware to the shops in the spring of 1949. Their designing is done together—both work on the models and make the molds. Their work may be found in shops in Boston, New York, Miami, Houston, Dallas, Los Angeles, Seattle, Alaska and many other places. Following is a statement concerning their method of work, as well as a description of a fountain they designed and produced for an Akron library.

Often we are asked why we work in porcelain. The answer, frankly, is because we like tremendously working with porcelain and like immensely the finished result.

The act of making an object has to be an enjoyable one or the end product would not be worth the doing. If fabricating parts in other materials, using prefabricated parts, machine tools, etcetera, have advantages either in the making or in the product—we believe in using them. We are designers. Porcelain is our major material.

THE FOUNTAIN—The large shapes are copper tubing cages with enamel on copper panels. One unit is mainly white toned with a light clear yellow. One is mustard and cold yellow, the remaining one is in terra cottas to orange reds. The other shapes are all porcelain—the colors clear yellow, white, mustard and terra cottas. These pieces are in solid colors, not toned.

The porcelain shapes are mounted on stainless steel rods and tubes. Work under the concrete was quite complex—mainly the problem of assuring stability under all weather





Porcelain serving dishes

High ball, Old sashioned, shot or wine tumbler Whickey decanter Condiment jars

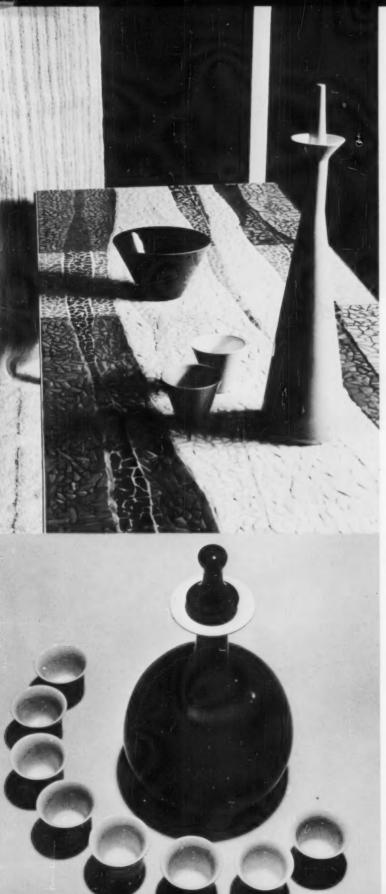




conditions, assuring perpendicular stems, and withstanding kids. We fabricated the units in our shop, leaving only the connections to the water supply to the plumbers.

The tubes carry water. The small button shapes burble and the long thin spray from the stems of the large units splash on the mushroom shapes and fill the funnel shapes. Holes in the bases of the funnel shapes let water through, creating another water pattern and added excitement.

Luke and Rolland Lietzke



Porcelain serving bowl Porcelain decanter and cups Beverage set

LUCIE RIE Stoneware cup and saucer and bowl

Stoneware vase and bowl





Lucie Rie was born in 1902, went to England in 1938, and shortly afterwards started to work at Albion Mews where she now has her studio. She has exhibited at the Berkeley Galleries, and her work may always be seen at Heals Ltd., Primavera and Heffer's Art Gallery, Cambridge.

Using an electric kiln, she has achieved a wide range of wares in stoneware, tin-glazed earthenware and porcelain. Her pottery is original, sometimes bold and striking, sometimes delicate, always inventive and poetic.

Lucie Rie studied pottery both independently and with Michael Powolny at the Kunstgewerbe-Schule in Vienna, and is well known as an artist-potter of acknowledged technical accomplishment. On settling in England, and largely as a result of talks with Bernard Leach, she began to develop a fresh style. Using subtle yet simple shapes and decoration, her most characteristic work now is in thin, cream raw-glazed porcelain. Her pots are essentially feminine and bear a sensitive relation to contemporary trends in architecture. Their decoration is often restricted to unglazed bands of brown manganese pigment through which fine linear patterns are cross-hatched. She makes cups and saucers and other useful wares, and also works in stoneware. She limits her color range mainly to cream and brown-black, with an occasional yellow glaze, or more recently, a limited use of quiet green or blue.*

*Taken from ARTIST-POTTERS IN ENGLAND by Muriel Rose



Stoneware cup and saucer and bowl Stoneware vase and bowl Stoneware pitchers





Porcelain bowl and stoneware tray

Stoneware fruit bowl





Porcelain and stoneware bowls

Stoneware bowl and tray
Stoneware coffee pot, cup and saucer

TRUDI AND HAROLD SITTERLE



Trudi and Harold Sitterle—Trudi Sitterle was born in Illinois, received her art training at the Art Institute of Chicago, and was director of art in department stores and advertising agencies in Chicago, New Orleans and Washington, D. C. Harold Sitterle was born in lowa and received his art training at the Mizen Academy, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the American Academy in Chicago. He worked as an art director in a large department store, spent three years in the AAF during World War One, and was art director for a woman's magazine. The Sitterles started their own studio-shop in 1949. They have two daughters.

Porcelain compote and sherbet dishes





Porcelain, which so greatly changed our way of life, came to us in searching for a pure white material. That was some six years ago and we have been working with it ever since.

Porcelain is a word which came into use in the 15th and the 16th centuries when Portuguese navigators spread the ware throughout Europe. It is taken from the Portuguese word "porcellana," meaning small, bright-polished sea shell. This unique material has been in existence since as early as 617 A.D., during the T'ang Dynasty in China, but the secret of producing it remained a mystery to western minds until the 18th century.

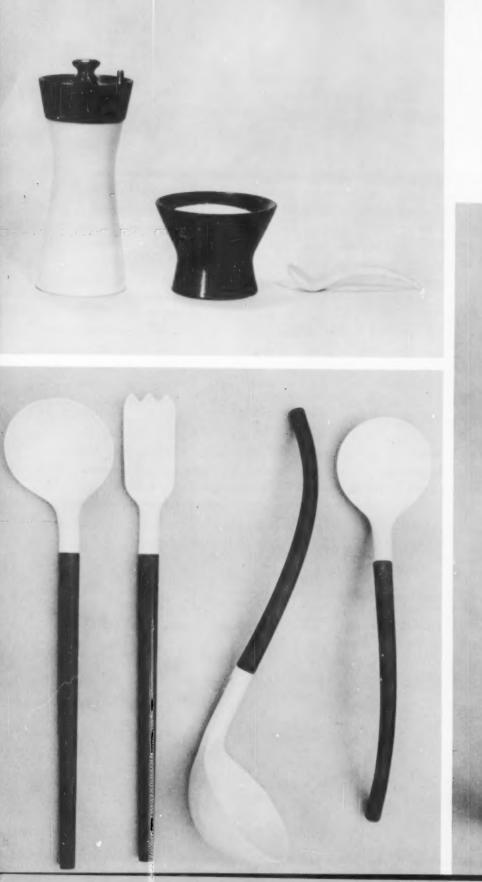
Porcelain is essentially silica and alumina with a few necessary impurities obtained from four white-burning raw materials: kaolin, ball clay, flint and feldspar. This composition, with the glaze on, is fired only once (the glaze is made of the same ingredients as the body but in different proportions). Extreme density, translucency and impermeability distinguish porcelain from terra cotta, faience and earthenware. Much confusion arises about the word today because it is used so loosely to describe many other materials such as glass coatings for metals, frits and china.

There are unlimited challenges in working with this material. We do everything ourselves. As a result we spend most of our time designing, making kilns, machinery, clay working, or at business activities. Though it is difficult for a designer or potter to make a living producing, by hand, the things in which he believes, we feel there is still a good chance to do this today. A craftsman has the chance to grace a material with personal skill and art, the two things which will always be free of machine competition.

The art and spirit in various crafts and industries are being greatly depreciated by over-emphasizing rationalizations such as "functionalism," "uniformity," "durability," "profit," and "efficiency." These values are very often over-emphasized for the sake of mass production because they are so well suited to machines. However, in taking a second look at what is being done, it may be seen that the fault does not lie with the machines but with our understanding of purpose. Perhaps ideas such as "beauty," "character," and "imagination" might sell just as well, and serve some purposes better.

We think that there is an art to porcelain making and have found a market for the things we make. We hope other individuals who would like to make things in their own way will be encouraged to ignore the despairing thought, "Can what I make compete with mass produced things?"

Trudi and Harold Sitterle



Porcelain and rosewood peppermill Rosewood salt dish Porcelain spoon

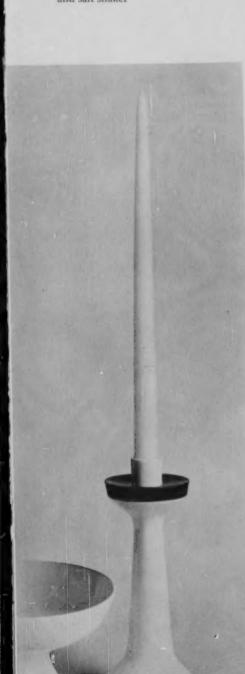
Porcelain and rosewood servers

Porcelain and rosewood candlesticks Porcelain compote

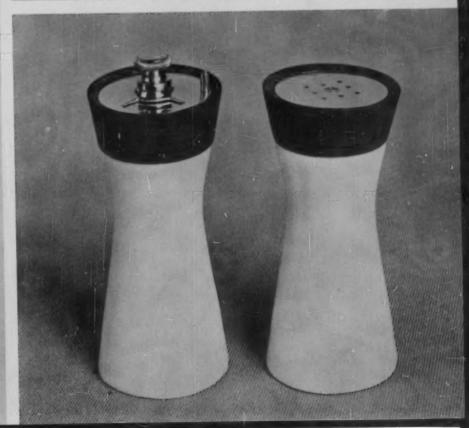


Twistmill, peppermills, salt dishes with porcelain spoons

Porcelain and rosewood peppermill and salt shaker







MANTEGNA, by E. Tietze-Conrat, Phaidon Press, 1955. 258 pages, 65 figures, 152 plates. \$8.50

Some artists seem to be peculiarly at the mercy of destiny; the disappearance and destruction of their works appear to be too consistent, when viewed from the vantage point of our own day, not to imply the existence of a malignant Fate. Such is the case with Andrea Mantegna. Commonly acknowledged one of the most original and most highly gifted of the numerous artists who made the 15th century in Italy a fabulous period in the history of European art, the destruction by bombing during the last World War of his fresco cycle in the church of the Eremitani at Padua climaxed a disastrous sequence of misfortunes. His only other existent frescoes, those decorating the CAMERA Degli Sposi in the ducal palace at Mantua, had begun to decay in his own day and have more recently suffered several damaging rettorations. His other extant cyclethe canvases depicting the TRIUMPH OF CAESAR, also painted for the Gonzaga family and now at Hampton Court-is a wreck. Most of his easel paintings, especially those on canvas or cloth, are not in a satisfactory condition. Only an occasional painting, like the CHRIST WITH Angels in Copenhagen or the Madonna And Child WITH CHERUBIM in the Brera Gallery in Milan, reveals fully the tense vitality of his draughtsmanship or his coloristic beauty.

This unhappy tale makes all the more heartening the appearance of a new and serious monograph on Mantegna. Written by a specialist on Venetian art, one moreover who has been personally interested in Mantegna for some time, this book is a definite contribution to the study of the artist. Kristellar's earlier monograph, still unexcelled in many respects, is often out of date, and the English translation is sometimes maladroit. None of Fiocco's subsequent writings on Mantegna has been translated into English. Mrs. Tietze-Conrat's volume is succinct and well-organized. A short introduction precedes the plates, which are followed by the critical catalogue; the latter is divided into sections containing the paintings, drawings, prints, and lost works. The work has the virtues characteristic of the Phadon Press monographs—a clearly

printed and easily readable text, and numerous largescale illustrations.

The introduction concentrates on the major phases of Mantegna's life, in chronological sequence-his relationships with his teacher and foster-parent Squarcione and with pre-existent painting in Padua, and the involved history of the commissions for the Ovetari Chapel in the Eremitani; his connections with Donatello and Florentine art and with the Bellini family and Venetian paintings; his long activity as court-painter at Mantua for Lodovico, Federico, and Giovanni Francesco Gonzaga and Isabella d'Este; his changing concepts of antiquity and antique art throughout his life; his own difficult but understandable personality. The text is a compact, judicious blend of original source-material and more recent criticism, of historical fact or surmise and stylistic analysis. The latter is often convincingly perceptive; witness the sentences describing the frescoed portraits in the ducal palace at Mantua (p. 17): "Every profile is increased to a bas-relief, every face seen frontally or in three-quarter view becomes a bust, every life-size figure a monument. It is not a question of beautifying or of psychological penetration, but that all these people . . . produce the impression of being personalities."

Whereas the introduction is written primarily for the general reader, the critical catalogue is aimed understandably at the student and specialist. The paintings and drawings are listed according to the place where they are to be found, and the entries include dimensions, inscriptions, histories, notes on condition, early references, critical comments by other writers, iconographical peculiarities, etc. As a result, at times problematical paintings, like the Dublin and Washington Judiths, take up considerably more space than some of the universally accepted works like the Bergamo or Berlin MADONNA AND CHILD or the Berlin Portrait Of Cardinal Mezzarota. To the uninitiated this might well suggest a lack of balance. This attitude is not necessarily correct; the disparity is rather a flaw inherent in the methodology of conscientious art history. Mrs. Tietze-Conrat's caution in accepting works as authentic is to be admired; far too many mediocre ones have been attributed to Mantegna, and others are in poor enough shape to make definitive judgment almost impossible. The reviewer is in full agreement with the author on rejected works. He also finds her more general statements usually justifiable, such as her decision that the London Samson And Delilah is the best of the late monochromatic paintings and should be the standard for other similar works. With respect to works accepted as genuine, he would quarrel only with the DEAD CHRIST in New York, which he considers, like the reviewer in the Burlington Magazine (Dec., 1956. page 450), an inferior copy of the painting in the Brera. The Washington Christ Child may be authentic, but it is an unpleasant piece. Entries occasionally assume a sibylline ambiguity, due to the complexity of subject, the need for verbal compression, and the author's scholarly thoroughness (see Venice, San Marco, DEATH OF THE VIRGIN, for example).

The reviewer considers the catalogues of drawings and prints to be less admirable. In the first place, not all the drawings listed are reproduced, and, under the circumstances, any arbitrary choice of illustration is annoying. Even though the problem of the group of drawings that lies between Mantegna and Giovanni Bellini has been treated elsewhere, it would have been advisable to recapitulate the question here with considerably greater textual and illustrative amplitude than was done; the magnificent drawing of St. James Led To Execution in the Gathorne-Hardy collection, unmistakably a study for the fresco in the Eremitani, might well serve as a point of departure for Mantegna's share in this group. The spolvero (a type of auxiliary final cartoon previously known only from technical literature) in Mantua for the MADONNA OF VICTORY seems unbelievably fresh, from the reproductions, for a 15th century study. Could it be, as Fiocco suggests, an unusual record made when the painting was sent to Paris in the Napoleonic period? The drawing of GANYMEDE ON THE EAGLE, in Paris, appears to lack the crisp linear authority and energetic movement of the EAGLE at Donnington Priory and the matching BIRD EATING A FLY in the British Museum; admittedly

the reproduction of the drawing is poor, and it may be misleading.

With regard to the prints, Mrs. Tietze-Conrat considers them all to be by various reproductive engravers who were part of Mantegna's shop. This idea, which she has previously made public, goes counter to the traditional view which gives the best ones, seven in number, to Mantegna, and the rest to the studio. It is true that the early references to Mantegna's activity as a print-maker are not numerous and not very explicit; it is likewise true that the prints are not signed, in contradistinction to many of his paintings. But after seeing a Mantegna print in excellent condition, like the superlative MADONNA AND CHILD exhibited recently in the great print show held at Minneapolis, Cleveland, and Chicago, one must either accept Mantegna's authority or postulate the existence of a second artist in his studio who could fully equal him in sensitivity and economic power of line, in plastic intensity of form, and in tragic expressiveness of mood. This anonymous alter ego strikes me as an absurdity.

The book's plates are printed on glazed paper, the usual method for the less expensive Phaidon monographs. These seem always slightly less attractive visually than those printed on a mat surface, like the ones in the recent publication on Bernini by Wittkower for the same firm. Several of the plates reproducing entire compositions are rather more gray in tone than is desirable. On the other hand, many of the details, which exist in large numbers and which constitute one of the really enticing qualities of the book, are excellent (pls. 1, 21, 49, 53, 58, 59, etc.). Only a few of the details are again blurred (pls. 7, 69, 106). The colored plates are uniformly inadequate; the detail of the Madrid Death Of The Virgin is perhaps closest of all to its original.

With its shortcomings and faults, Mrs. Tietze-Conrat's volume remains not only the best available one for English-reading audiences, but also one of the best monographs written on Mantegna. It worthily commemorates the fascinating genius who easily maintains his place in the galaxy of stars that is 15th century Italian painting.

Hylton A. Thomas

